

2
The Folly of Wintless Women Displayed:

OR THE

HISTORY

OF THE

Haveral Wives,

IN THIS TOWN

WRITTEN BY

HUMPHREY CLINKER,

THE CLASHING WIVES
CLERK.

Being a comical Conference between

Maggie and Janet;

His twa auld AUNTIES.

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HISTORY of the HAVERAL WIVES

IT is a certain old saying, That where women are conven'd in crowds, there can be but little silence; and some have acknowledged that it was a great bondage for them to hold their peace in the church; and where there is much talk by ignorant speakers, it is diverting for persons of understanding to hear them. Therefore, we have furnished the public with a small collection of old wives noted sayings and wonders, which they relate happened in their own time, also what has been told them by their forefathers.

Two old wives *Maggy* and *Janet*, at their rocks, began their crack as follows

Janet. A dear *Maggy*, how old will ye be now? O' it's lang since I ken'd ye.

Mag. Indeed, *Janet*, that's what naeboddy kens for my father and mither had sae mony o' us they ne'er counted how auld ane o' us was; they minded aye wha o' us was born first, and wha was nist ane anither and that was a' that e'er we sought to ken about it; but I hae mind o' the mirk Munanday.

Jan. Hout, tout, woman the mirk Munanday! I mind since there was nae Munandays at a', and the Sabbath days was nae come in fashion; there was a day they caw Sunday come anes o' the ouk for it; we kend aye when it came, for my father caw'd aye his beard whan the bell rang, and than every body ran to the kirk it had ony thing ado gin it were to buy taut or shune, for the chapman childs set up a' their creims at the kirk door, an the lassies wad gotten keeking glasses red snoods, needles prins ellhie irons, gowlets, broun bread and black saep to buy forby sweety wives things, and rattles for restless little anes; the men wad a boughr pints o' ale, an gotten a wang o' good cheese to chow i' the time o' drinking o' it. Ay, ay, there was braw markets on Sunday i' the time o' paepery, we had nae minsters then, but priors, mess Johns, black friars and whit friars, monks, aboete and billops, thy had

nae wives, yet the best o' them wad a spoken bawdy language, and kis'd the lasses; like fykin bodies they ware, unco ill to please; they wad baith curs'd fouk and blest'd them, just as ye paid them: a deed they war unco greedy o' the penny, and pray'd aye to the dead fouk, and gaird the living pay them for't; and tho' thy had plav'd the loop wi' a poor hizzy the durst nae speak o't for her very life for they cou'd gi' ony body o'er to the deil whan they liket. They didna gar sock learn to read and pray like our new ministers, but thump on your breast, irack your fingers o'er oboon your nose, tell your beads, and rin barefit through amang hard flanes and cold snaw.

Mag. Hech women! an wad they had carnal dealings wi' the women, and them sae good and haly

Jan. Hoot, ye daft gowk! do ye think their goodness gel'd them, tho' they had nae wives? There was a great sort o' them they ca'd cardonels, that aye whan twa young bodies was married, thy but to hae the first night o' the bride.

Mag. Nae worth the filthy hoorin dogs, if I wadna libbet them mysel; I wonder that the gentle fouks and lairds lut them do the like o' that

Jan. A dear woman, the gentle fouks and the lairds kept aye in wi them for they said thy had the command o' the deil and the dead fouk, and the gentles durstna cast cut wi' them, for they got a' their sins pardon'd for the l'st siller.

Mag. A dear woman, that was unco like, the deil wad get nae body then but the poor fouk, and them that had nae siller.

Jan. A weel a way that was true, for gif they paid the prill weel the deil durstna meddle wi' them

Mag. A wow woman! What's come o' them a now? am sure the like o' thae fouk that had se mukle power, need neither die nor yet be sick; they wad live a' their days.

Jan. A wat weel did they, for the maist o' them is

dead and rotten, and the rest o' them gath'awa to Italy where the auld Pope their father, the deil, the witches brownies and faries dwalt; and then we gat anither sort o' gospel fouk they ca'd curists, a fine sort o' dainty honest bodies they war. but gay and greedy; they di'na like sculdery wark, but saie na meikle against it for a hantle bits o' callens wad a gotton twa or three bastards before they wad gotten breaks; they but ta hae their tiths of every thing that grew; mony a time my father wisht they wad take tiths o' his hemp too, if it were to hang themselves. They were aye warst where a poor man or wife died, though they left weans fatherless and mitherless; a deed they wad sent their belman, and wi' his lang prelatie fingers he wad har'd the uper pair of blankets aff the poor things bed, for some rent they gard fouks pay for dying, sae did they een; and yet they keepest a hantle braw haly days, when we gat our wames for o' fat brose, and suppit yule fowens till our sarks had been like to rive; and after that, eaten roasted cheese and whit puddings weel spiced O-bra'times for the guts! Weel I wat ony body might live than, that had ony thing to live on.

Mag. But dear Janet, ye'er braw and lang o' the memery, do ye mind o' the wae'fu' blast, when the foul theif was raging in the air, and the deil dang down a' the kail-yard dykes, cutted the corn stacks, turr'd the houses, and blew giddy Willy's wig in the wall? They said it was some young minister had rais'd the deil, and for want o' a cock a cat or some unkirsen'd creature to gi him, they cou'dna get him laid again, an he brak the bridie, slipped his head, and ran frae, them.

Jan. A deed woman I heard tell o' that; and how wood Willy Mc Neal met him on the steps in the mids o' the water, and shot him o'er, and thought to drow him, but he made down the water like a meikle brand.

time the deil came to this kint. ey was on a Sunday ; I was a wee bit gaus lassie ; my father and a the men folk was a the kirk ; there was twa o' them. a hummel'd ane and a horn'd ane, a goodman deil and a good wife deil, as we took them to be ; we ran a' into the house, and my mither barr'd the door, and hunted the dogs out at the byre hole, thinking the deil wad rin frae the dogs ; but na, na, they gat upon their tae end like two auld men ; they wore a' rugh lang hair like a pyet horse, wi' lang beards aneath their chin, and the meikle horn'd deil box'd the dogs in at the hole again ; we ran a' ben the house and gart ; but our Jock, who was a little gabby gaun laddok, cried. Aye, mither, mither, whar is the deil feekin hear ? he'll be warring to tak the auld wives and the cats to make witches o' them. I trow whan my grandmither heard that, she gat up and ran ben the house. and crap in the bear-meal barrel ; to hide hersel frae them, and curr'd there till the kirk skail'd ; she was sae feard, she made her burn in the barrel ; and what was't after a' but a tupe and a ewe, o' Highland gaits the laird got to gie the lady milk ; bnt mony a day we lough at the twa deils.

Mag. But dear woman, what an a body is that deil that ilka body is sae feard for him ? is't in him they ca' auld Nick ? what for do they ca' auld Nick ?

Jan. Deed woman I dinna ken whar like a body he is, but they say he is a' blak, and they ca, him auld Nick because he is aulder no Adam, and Adam was the first man in the world ; and they say the deil will never die, nor yet be sick, or hae fair een.

Mag. A woe Janet, but ye're witty creature ; but can ye tell me what way the Blackamoors is made ? some folk says they are dipped in cats blood, and burnt bear strae, but are thinking tee later doicks them in among the broe that they lie, he black clath wi', and then sells them to the lairds an gentle folk. to flay their brains wi' or dis the gentles eat them a ban

(6)
Jan. Hout awa, daft creature! the Blackamoors is fouk just like oursel, on: they hae black skin on them. Did ye never see black sheep and white sheep, black horse and white horse? I think they'er a' deils because the deil's blacker. I thought langyne they were made for the penny, and sell'd the coats o' the black skin.

Mag. But Janet, did ye e'er see the deil? I wad fain ken what like he is, some say he is like a bul, a bear, or an auld beegger na a'.

Jan. Indeed I never saw the deil a' my days; but I've heard the ministers misca'ing him and when they said a' they cou'd say o' him, they ca'd him an ill spirit, and a great liar; mony ane has war names than a that yet.

Mag. But do you think there is ony deils bat ane? evere body is speaking and crying on him, and cou'dna ansuer them a'.

Jan. I deed they say there's black anes and white anes o' them, hummel anes and horn'd anes, the very witches is haf deils whan they are living, and hail deils whan they are dead; the brownies is haf dogs haf deils a' rough but the mou'h seeks nae cla'se, as mans meat will fair them, and they'll do ten men's wark in ae night; for! hobgoblins, faeries and elfs, that shoots fouks bea'sts to dead, and no' hole to be seen in the skin o' them. Hard ye na tell o' the twa flighland wives? how the tane cried Ochon, ochon, Shenet my cow is shot! Hoch, quo' she, wha shot her? Deed it was the deil. Och, Shenet, we'll a' be shot whan the deil has gotten a gun.

Mag. Sweet be wi' us, woman! it's an unco thing they dinna flee on the minister, whan he flytes and miscaws them sae; do you think they hear him?

Jan. Ay, they hear and see too; they are neither blind nor bier ced; but aye whan ye speak o' them, name the day, cry its Waulday through a' the world, and there is nae fears o' you.

Mag. But what do ye think o' your minister? is he a goo' man think ye?

Jan. Indeed, I think he is a gay gabby body, but he has twa fauts and his wife has three: he's unco greedy o' filler, and aye preaching down pride and up charity, and yet he's that fou o' pride himself, that he has gotten a glass winnock on ilka side o' his nose, and his een is as clear as twa clocks to lück to; he has twa gilliegawkies o' dochters, wha come to the kirk wi' their coblethow murches frizled up as braid as their hips, and clear things like stars about their necks, and at ilka lug a wallopin white thing hingin' like a snorter at a bubb'y wean's nose; syne about their necks a bit thin clath like a maul web, and their twa bits o' paps aye playing niddity nod, shining through it like twa yerning-bags. Shame fa' them and their flim-garis baith, for I get nae good o' the preaching looking at them and a' the shairny hought bizies in the parish maun hae the like or lang gae; but ane I wae to preach, sic pride sadna hae baith peace and property in my parish; I wad point out my finger to them in the kirk and name them, baith name and surname, and say, Their fi's shairny Meg o' the mill, stumpy May o' the moss, sniveling Ket wi' her hodle makemiler coat; they come into the kirk hobbing their bin quarters lik water wag tails, shaking their heads like a bunder pund horse, smaking their lips and hading their mouth like May-pudocks; and what shall I compare them to? painted Jezebels, the whore of Babylon, Rachel the harlot, wi' a their gaudy decoying colours, high tap, and spread glittering tails: whan they come into the house of prayer, as it wae a house o' dancing and debauchery. Gae, ye painted preef-wips, or sairs or waddins, and there display your proud banners o' pride, whilk ye'er puft up wi'; its the very spirit o' the deil, and unbecoming the house o' prayer. But if the gilliegawkies shou'd come into the kirk wi' their heels up and their heads down, our mfs Jobu is like ane o' the dogs o' Egypt, he winna move his tongue; and I believe he

8

dharena for clippock his wife, wha's element is to banter a' the poor beggars frae her door; nane can stand her but the tinkler wives; and she is aye whinging about charity, but it is to herself. She winna pity the cripple on the blind's back but bids them gae hame to their ain parish, filthy beggar dirt; she casts a' her cauld parritch and kail to the cocks and hens, kioks the poor colly dogs out at the door, ca's them filthy uselefs brutes, because they canna lay eggs like hens eggs! She is aye flytin on the jassies, hungers her servant lads, eats cocks and hens herself, and gars the poor minister eat four herrin.

Mag. Weel I wat then, I wish he minna turn a drunken body, for herrin maks souk dry. But now Janet, ye hae tald their fauts on baith the sides, and I hae a great fault to our minister yet, and though I were dead and rotten the night afore the morn I'll neither forgit nor forget him for what he did to me; he said I shoud be tane and douked for osrin to marry again, or any woman at my age; an auld man, said he, ought to marry some kindly body to keep him clean in his auld age; but an auld woman, that can wash a cud sark to her sell, needs nae men; and nouw, Janet I'm no to ca' auld, tho' I am stricken in years; I dinna ken my ain age, being kirsened in the time o' J. pery.

Enters Humphrey Clinker hearing a' that past, perfundes his aunt Maggy that no man would marry such as her, for she looked like a picture of death riding on hunger's back, for want o' teeth to chew bread for the nourishment o' her body, and that he was come to write her testament; therefore, she ought to go to bed and die directly. The priest being sent for, he came and discoursed he; but she keeping her purse in her hand, would not part with it, for she wad tak it wi' her, for souk is the better o' the penny, gang what tenny like, 10 JU 52 J. N. 4 18.

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